

A newsletter of unusual reports on various subjects. Published on an irregular schedule as an exchange publication only with others of a like nature. Comments should be sent to: Gene Duplantier, 17 Shetland Street, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada M2M 1X5

The Toronto Sun, Wednesday March 20, 1996

New Mexico festival out of this world

Roswell, a town in New Mexico, is expecting plenty of visitors from out of town — from way out of town — over the July 6-7 weekend.

That's when Roswell will host its second annual UFO Encounter Festival.

Guided field trips will be offered to the 1947 crash site of an unidentified flying object known by aficionados as "the incident," according to New Mexico's tourism officials.

UFO researchers, authors and "phenomenologists" will host public lectures and

present papers. And visitors can also check out two local museums, the UFO Enigma Museum and the International UFO Museum and Research Centre.

For tourist information about Roswell, call its chamber of commerce at (505) 623-5695.

THE TORONTO STAR Saturday, February 10, 1996

Travel to asteroid possible by 2010, astronomer says

BALTIMORE, Md. — The man who has helped discover more asteroids than any other person says the world's next great manned space mission should be to visit some of them.

Eugene Shoemaker, who together with Canadian David Levy found the comet that pounded Jupiter last year, says humans could realistically be standing on an asteroid before 2010.

"The asteroids would be the easiest thing in the solar system to visit, easier than the moon," Shoemaker said in an interview after a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science here.

"You don't even have to land," he said. "You can just get into orbit around one and go down and visit."

About 1,500 large asteroids revolve near the earth's orbital path around the sun, more than 80 of which Shoemaker himself has helped find.

Shoemaker said a trip to some of the closer ones would send earthlings about 15 million kilometres away from their planet and last about six months.

Asteroids, which are part of a planet that failed to form, hold the key to

discovering how the earth itself evolved and might eventually prove a source for rare metals such as platinum, Shoemaker said.

Earlier in the day, former NASA astronaut Gary Payton described a new American effort that could make such missions into space much cheaper.

Payton is leading a team of government and private-sector scientists and engineers in the planning and building of a reusable one-piece launch vehicle that can return to space within days of landing.

Payton said the vehicle, which will be ready early next century, will not have the detachable stages that make shuttle flights so expensive and time-consuming to prepare and will chop the price of launching a pound of equipment into orbit from \$10,000 to less than \$1,000.

Shoemaker, an astronomer with the Lowell Observatory and U.S. Geological Survey, said an asteroid-bound vehicle could be built in orbit via such transport ships, making its escape from earth's gravitational pull much easier.

— Joseph Hall

THE TORONTO STAR Thursday, March 28, 1996

Nerve damage, Gulf war linked

LONDON (Reuters) — A scientist has found evidence British veterans suffering from so-called Gulf War Syndrome may in fact have damage to their nervous systems.

The research, believed by scientists to be the first to pinpoint any clinical reason for the veterans' symptoms, was published yesterday in the authoritative *Journal Of Neurology, Neurosurgery And Psychiatry*.

British neurologist Goran Jamal found evidence of dysfunction in the nervous systems — particularly in the limbs — of 14 people randomly selected from a list of veterans with unexplained illnesses. The evidence, which Jamal's researchers said needs further study, is a blow for the British defence ministry, which has maintained there is no evidence of a common syndrome among Gulf vets.

CIA cites terror threat

WASHINGTON (Reuters) — The threat of nuclear, chemical or biological attacks by extremists has never been greater, a Central Intelligence Agency official warned Congress yesterday.

"The chilling reality is that nuclear materials and technologies are more accessible now than at any other time in history — due primarily to the dissolution of the former Soviet Union and the region's worsening economic conditions," Gordon Oehler, director of the CIA's Nonproliferation Centre, told a Senate committee, adding: "The potential for additional chemical and biological attacks by (extremist) groups continues to grow."

UFO spotters excited as new sightings recorded

New arguments rage about the old question: Is there anybody out there?

BY PATRICIA ORWEN
FEATURE WRITER

In the small Northwest Territories town of Fort Resolution, residents have been mesmerized nightly since Jan. 4 by a mysterious display of pulsating multicolored lights dancing in the twilight sky.

In England last week, British

aviation experts announced they could not explain a close encounter between a passenger jet and a wedge-shaped UFO, emblazoned with small white lights.

In South Korea in December, television footage inadvertently shot by a cameraman clearly showed a large metallic disk flying at supersonic speed.

Unidentified flying objects, real or imagined, have been with us for thousands of years — from ancient Egypt's pyramid-building "Chariots of the Gods" to the alien kidnapping screenplays of the X-Files TV series.

But never has the mania for little green (or gray) men from

other worlds been as lively — and as controversial — as it is today.

About 350 UFO sightings were reported across Canada last year. That's more than double the number seven years ago, according to University of Manitoba researcher Chris Rutkowski.

A few weeks ago, skeptics who considered Earth to be the only inhabitable sphere in the universe were dealt a blow when astronomers at San Francisco State University announced the discovery of two large, potentially life-sustaining globes a mere 35 light years away.

Scientists, skeptics, autopsies,

abductees: What's going on here?

Could the stuff of science fiction be real?

The answers are elusive.

"What you believe may depend on what kind of science you practise," says Michael Persinger, director of Behavioral Neuroscience at Sudbury's Laurentian University.

Most UFO sightings — 90 per cent at least — turn out to be identifiable planes, stars, meteors or weather balloons. The remainder, like the wedge-shaped UFO that buzzed the British Airways Boeing 737 last Jan. 6, remain unsolved mysteries.

"We've never had a case like

☛ Please see Craft, WS2

☛ Continued from WS1

this where we've looked at all the possibilities and still we just don't know," says Anne Noonan, a press officer with the London-based Civil Aviation Authority.

Noonan says people on the ground spotted the flying object, but for some inexplicable reason, it didn't appear on radar screens. The jet's pilot and co-pilot said the craft passed so close to them that they ducked. It moved silently and without creating wind turbulence.

"We don't know if there's an extraterrestrial possibility here," says Noonan. "We just know it's nothing we can explain."

Both Persinger and British researcher Paul Devereux maintain, however, that there are other possibilities to consider in such cases. Most strange lights answering to the typical UFO description are actually caused by normal processes within our own planet Earth, they say.

UFO sightings typically occur in areas with both strange weather and geophysical activity, such as tremors and earthquakes. Being in an area where such geological phenomena is occurring can cause a temporary malfunction in the brain, which may trigger a wide range of fantasies.

And then there's the fear of the approaching millennium — millennia! hysteria, as some refer to it.

"People now generally feel a lack of security," Persinger says. "They see that their

jobs and marriages — once believed to be so stable — may not last."

The greater one's emotional stress or instability, he says, the more one is likely to have a "visitation experience" — a sense of being in the presence of someone or something from another world.

"TV's aliens are likely to figure in the visitations because the media have made the aliens our gods," Persinger says.

But don't tell any of this to those who say they have had "real contact."

'I've seen the triangular ships in the sky,' doctor says

Dr. Laurie Vassos, a medical doctor in Saskatoon, says he has been transported out of his home to the interior of a strange craft by aliens. And he is treating patients who say they, too, have been abducted.

"In my case, these aren't just vivid dreams," says Vassos. "My senses tell me that my experiences are real."

"I've seen the triangular ships in the sky and I've been with them," says Joyce Halfin, who hosts a bi-weekly Interstellar-UFO show on Rogers Cable television in Newmarket.

Though the town of St. Paul, Alta., actually has a flying saucer landing pad, Halfin

says the aliens she knows will dock soon in underground caverns beneath Bradford.

The aliens believe that "we've messed up the planet . . . we've lost touch with nature," says Halfin.

According to her off-planetary sources, things may get worse on Earth in the near future. We may see more floods, earthquakes and volcanic activity. Aliens, she says, will land here in large numbers in order to assist us in the planetary chaos. Some of us may even depart the planet with them in their spaceships.

The ETs are also studying our genetic material and creating a new species — part human, part alien, says a Bowmanville woman who asks to remain anonymous.

She says she and her 27-year-old daughter have been abducted by aliens countless times in recent years and they now run a monthly support group for about a dozen other UFO abductees.

Their space abduction stories are similar in detail to those of nearly 100 other UFO abductees interviewed by Pulitzer Prize-winning Harvard psychiatrist John Mack.

In his 1994 book *Abduction: Human Encounters With Aliens*, Mack writes of people being transported through walls on beams of light and then being lifted into spaceships.

Nevada welcomes space aliens with their own landing strip

By CARLA HALL
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

LOS ANGELES — Space aliens at last have their own landing strip in the Nevada desert — courtesy of the state.

Desolate state route 375 has been officially christened the Extraterrestrial Highway — a nod by the state's transportation board to the area's reputation for otherworldly sightings, and a ploy to attract more terrestrial money-spending tourists.

Four highway signs proclaiming the new status will go up in the next couple of months. "Of course they're going to be both horizontal and vertical so extraterrestrials can see them as they land," chuckled Tom Tait, executive director of the Nevada Commission on Tourism.

Nevada Governor Bob Miller, the chair of the board that voted the new designation, suggested the signs be placed flat on the ground so that aliens can land on them.

Of more earthly concern, though, is making the signs big enough — maybe three metres wide. "Otherwise, if they're small we're worried they'll be stolen," said Tom Stephens, director of Nevada's Department of Transportation.

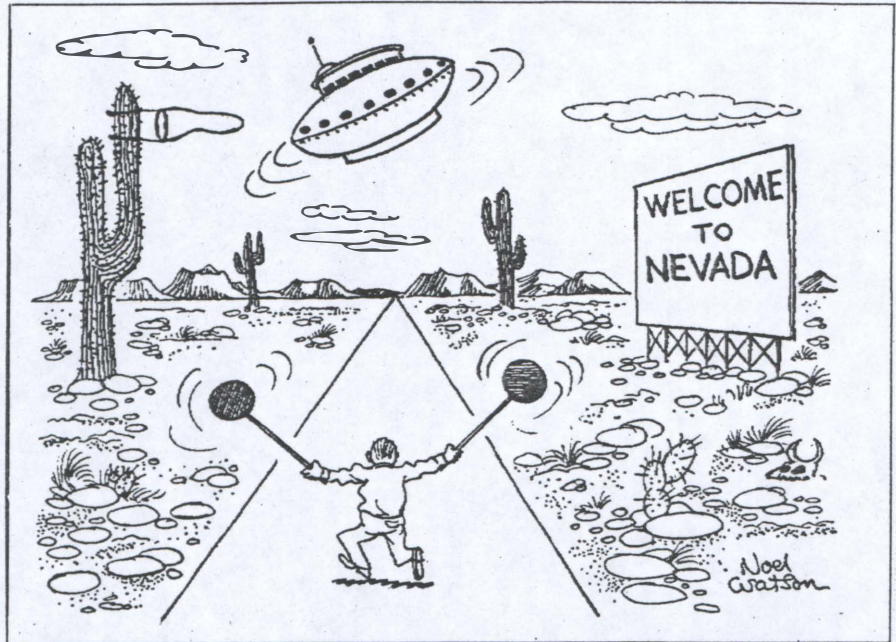
MAGNET FOR UFO SEEKERS

The highway sits 225 kilometres northeast of Las Vegas and, more importantly, just outside a top-secret U.S. Air Force range known informally as Area 51. The blacktop runs through an isolated swath of desert that has long been a magnet for UFO seekers from around the world.

Visitors and locals alike tell stories of seeing spaceships with odd lights traveling at warp speeds. The fact that all these sightings are close to a secret installation where experimental aircraft are believed to be tested has only fueled rumors that the military is testing captured alien spaceships there. Not surprisingly, the government denies this.

But Nevada has never been shy about coming up with gimmicks to make a little money, and the campaign to publicize the desert as a potential spaceport for extraterrestrials has been bubbling along for awhile.

A bill to rename the highway the "Extraterrestrial Alien Highway" was introduced in the Nevada Legislature last year by Assemblyman Roy Neighbors of Tonopah, but the measure died. The local Pioneer Territory division of



ALEX NOEL WATSON / COPYRIGHT 1996

the state tourism commission took up the cause several months ago and recommended the highway be renamed.

"Basically it's pretty harmless," said Jim Merlino, a member of the Pioneer Territory board. "Any stimulation those poor folks can get from anyone trying to come through, alien or otherwise, would be really welcome."

Traffic on the highway in 1994 amounted to a grand total of 53 cars a day, according to Stephens. But local officials hope a name change will do for Route 375 what the appellation "Loneliest Highway in America" did for U.S. 50. It made it a little less lonely — and gave the state a chance to market "loneliest highway survival kits" and encourage people to stop at some points along the way.

As marketing tools go, name changes are cheap. The signs will cost \$3,360 U.S. — a "minuscule part of our sign budget," Stephens said.

The state transportation board easily approved the renaming earlier this month. The board had letters of support from several state legislators and heard testimony from a local gadfly who calls himself Merlin and says he was born on a flying saucer.

The proprietors of the highway's only restaurant/bar/motel, the Little A'Le'Inn — "Earthlings Welcome," says the sign on the door — urged the officials to act.

"Our little community has become internationally known," said Pat Trav-

is, who along with her husband, Joe, serves up "alien burgers" and good-natured hype at the Little A'Le'Inn in the tiny town of Rachel. The Travises celebrated on the way back home from the transportation board meeting in Carson City, the state capital.

"We made a big to-do about it in the car," she said. "We are the first two people to officially drive the Extraterrestrial Highway."

Of course, most of the supporters of the name change have more belief in economics than in extraterrestrials. But they'll play along.

WOULDN'T RULE OUT

"Let me put it this way — I wouldn't want to rule out other life out there," Assemblyman Neighbors said last fall, a few months after his bill died in the legislature.

"As for sightings? Well, I wouldn't want to ruin a good story," he said laughing.

"Extraterrestrial means it can be something just flying above the earth. It could be meteors," explained Stephens, whose own exposure to alien phenomena is limited to watching *The X-Files* with his 12-year-old son. The state, he notes, wanted to stay away from scientific pronouncements.

"None of the board members I know of has any special knowledge of visitors from outer space," he said.

THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

Scientist Sagan fights rising tide of nonsense

The Demon-Haunted World

BY CARL SAGAN
Random House, 457 pages
\$35.95

By MICHAEL SMITH

The checkout-counter tabloids tell wonderful stories about space aliens, crystals and giant faces on Mars. Who needs boring old facts when imagination is so much more fun?

Carl Sagan, astrophysicist, popularist and public scientist extraordinaire, thinks we do need the facts. "We've arranged a global civilization in which most crucial elements ... profoundly depend on science and technology," Sagan writes in *The Demon-Haunted World*. "We have also arranged things so that almost no one understands science and technology." This is a recipe for disaster.

Hardly anyone will disagree

with Sagan's main point: Science works. What's more, the tools of the working scientist — logic, reason, attention to detail, obsession with evidence, readiness to discard pet theories in the face of inconvenient facts — has revealed a world of wonders that outshines the tawdry inventions of the tabloids. If we want to be amazed, Sagan writes, the world of science has more marvels than enough.

Vigorous science, understanding how the world wags and predicting how it will wag in different circumstances, produces a vigorous technology. Every time we play a CD, start a car or take medicine, we implicitly acknowledge that science does the job.

In a democracy, the people should be able to understand and debate scientific questions, even if their knowledge is not highly technical. But Sagan rightly fears the rising tide of

nonsense is drowning rational voices.

He attacks two camps: the followers of pseudosciences, such as astrology, and the antiscience crowd — those who think that science is just another faith, that all is subjective and no way of understanding is better than any other.

To the pseudo-scientists Sagan issues a challenge: Show me. If your "science" works, prove it, unequivocally, precisely and in detail. To the antiscience relativists he poses a similar demand: If scientific thinking has no advantage, how is it that science works so well in producing precise, useful knowledge while dowsing, crystals and astrology do not?

Sagan spends considerable time debunking alien abductions, crop circles and the like. (Crop circles are a hoax; Doug Bower and Dave Chorley in Southampton have come for-

ward as the perpetrators).

He takes on the Christian fundamentalist Hal Lindsay, who is convinced that UFOs are real, part of a Satanic plot (the evidence is in certain Bible verses); discusses the autopsy of a "dead alien" shown on the Fox network last year; refutes Katrina Raphaell's trilogy of books on how crystals transmit thought.

This part of the book is great fun and will be very useful at dinner parties, especially if you happen to be seated next to an amateur UFOlogist. But Sagan also explores in detail why we see giant faces in a rather blurry picture of the surface of Mars or fantasize about being kidnapped by sex-obsessed aliens. There's more to it than gullibility, he concludes — some of these fantasies seem to be part of human psychology.

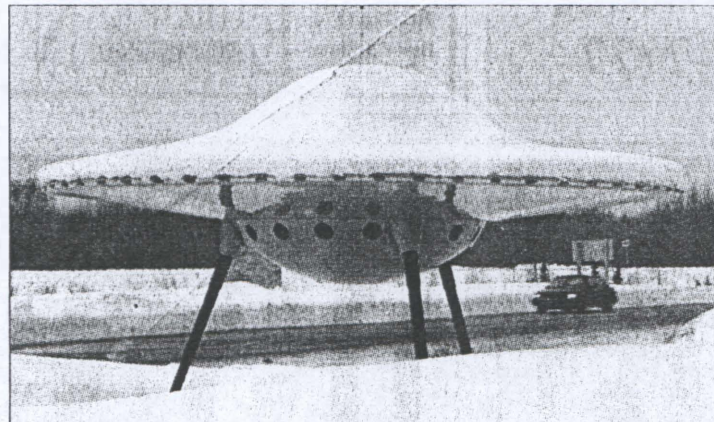
I treasure Sagan's "skeptic's tool kit" — a dozen or so tricks and techniques to cut your way

to something resembling the truth. For example: Think of all the possible explanations, not just one; don't get attached to an idea just because it's yours; look for ways to test your ideas; choose the simplest explanation that covers the facts.

He is less fun when he discusses solutions to the widespread ignorance and gullibility of the public, if only because there are no simple answers. The reader is left with a gloomy feeling as he outlines the failure of the American (and, I fear, Canadian) education system.

But there is hope. Surveys show that, even if huge numbers of people think astrology is scientific, millions more are eager for news about real science. More books like *The Demon-Haunted World* may help tip the balance.

Michael Smith is a Toronto science writer.



TOURIST ATTRACTIONS: The memory of Terry Fox is honored with a statue erected east of Thunder Bay, where Fox's 1980 attempt to run across Canada ended. The town of Moonbeam boasts a flying saucer.

THE TORONTO STAR Saturday, February 10, 1996

U.S. army destroys missile with laser

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Scientists for the first time used a ground-based laser yesterday to shoot down an armed, short-range rocket of the type used by guerrillas, U.S. military officials said. The U.S.-Israeli test, conducted at the White Sands missile range in New Mexico, involved a deuterium fluoride laser, the light from which is invisible to the naked eye, the army said.

Back to Earth

The obsession with finding intelligence in outer space goes on and on. Given the current and ever accelerating levels of war, greed, corruption, power, hunger, debauchery and moral, social and environmental degradation, etc., perhaps we should start looking for intelligence on Earth!

BERNARD GAGNON
Mount Forest

They ARE out there!

Allen Balt

504-9971

By Blake Brooker and Michael Green. Directed by Brooker. Choreographed by Denise Clark. Sound by Richard McDowell. Special Effects by Brad Struble. A One Yellow Rabbit presentation until March 24 at Factory Theatre, 125 Bathurst St.

BY GEOFF CHAPMAN
DRAMA CRITIC

Beam me up, Scotty, anybody, please!

If some small gray something, about four feet high with a large head, scoops you from the Queen streetcar on your way to work today then — if it lets you return — best nip down to Factory Theatre ASAP.

There, Calgary's One Yellow Rabbit theatre company is dangling *Alien Bait*, a play that opened last night about the dingbats who are sure they've been abducted by aliens and the investigators who're puzzling over them.

Its ensemble cast of four each plays two roles — abductee and "expert" — in a stylized, claus-

trophobically contained and clever look at the world of the manically self-absorbed.

Set at a UFO Symposium, making excellent use of lighting, minimalism and movement, slides and sound, the show maintains a pervasive sense of alienation with an inspired twist. The authors fire their mockery missiles at the experts, a quartet of conceited control freaks who invest their charges with tortuous theories while indulging in bureaucratic battles and ideological fights.

They have a minutely calculated taxonomic system that classifies abductors into small grays (who smell of wet cardboard and speak words with no vowels), praying mantis, tall humanoids, tall blondes — the European version — lizards, and even old Bigfoot.

Those who've been plucked, the twitchily tormented and traumatized victims, are shown as mostly ordinary, clear-headed folk who are fearful and lonely and guilty about having their beliefs made public. In vignettes that hint at rather than firmly declare why they're so

convinced they were whisked into spaceships and subjected to medical procedures and sexual acts — the sci-fi stuff of trash tabloids — we are made to see them bare their innermost feelings. Despite an abundance of jargon-laden suggestions, there's no proof of anything except the real pain of the believers.

History demonstrates that humanity does not relish believing in nothing. A vacuum is abhorred, so if you feel that religion is merely an unprincipled system of wishful thinking, then why not in this age of quiet fatalism believe they are out there.

Denise Clark, Andy Curtis, Elizabeth Stepkowski and Michael Green segue easily into prober and probee roles and the result is an eerie, thought-provoking 90 minutes of entertaining stagecraft combined with sophisticated barbs of wit.

It may well merely be all in your own head, but excuse me, I've got to straighten out the crop circles on my backyard lawn.

THE PLAIN DEALER / WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1995

Doctor probes objects reportedly left by aliens

By STEVE CHAWKINS

SCRIPPS HOWARD

VENTURA, Calif. — He didn't want his name used. He's a California surgeon and he's scared of repercussions.

"I'd probably be ostracized, I'd be criticized, maybe I'd even lose my license," he said. "People with credibility who put themselves forward in this field could wind up dead, in jail or out of business."

He performed the operations anyway, before witnesses and a video camera. He cut into the big toe of a woman and into the back of a man's hand. Both believed they'd been abducted by aliens. From both, he extracted small foreign objects with some unusual properties.

"No one has the answers," he said. "But we all know something's going on."

The doctor has been active in UFO groups for five years. Through them, he met a Houston UFO researcher who sent the purported abductees here for surgery last August.

The patients didn't know each other. Neither had been aware of the objects he or she carried. Neither bore any nearby scars or punctures. In both cases, the objects came to light in X-rays for minor, unrelated injuries.

In decades of practice, the doctor said he'd never seen anything quite like what he fished out.

The objects were encased in a thick, dark membrane. These

weren't cysts, he said. They were so tough, his scalpel couldn't cut them.

The object in the man was the size of a cantaloupe seed; one of the woman's two was T-shaped. Both patients jerked back when the doctor touched the objects — an unusual reaction for people calmed by hypnosis and placed on local anesthetics.

Back in Texas, the membranes were dried out and cut open, revealing tiny, highly magnetic pieces of a shiny black metal. Under ultraviolet light, they glowed a brilliant green — same as the "fingerprints" on the thighs and backs of some who claim to have been abducted, the doctor said.

Strange items have been pulled from "abductees" before but many somehow have disappeared before independent scientists could examine them. The skeptics remain skeptical.

"We haven't heard of anything that, without the shadow of a doubt, couldn't have been made here on Earth," said Barry Karr, director of the Center for Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal. "Let's see the evidence."

Perhaps they will.

The objects are in Houston for electrical, chemical and microscopic analysis. The patients who unwittingly carried them say they feel liberated. The doctor figures he'll be called on to perform more operations before long.

CR: BETH ROBBINS

Sherman's Lagoon

